

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-61. CANCELED

62. (currently amended) A method of creating and storing an electronic rental contract for a rental vehicle such that a user need not visit a rental counter to create a rental contract when arriving at a car rental facility to pick up the rental vehicle, the method comprising:

hosting a website on a server system, the website comprising a plurality of web pages for access over a network by any of a plurality of client systems;

creating a rental vehicle reservation in response to data received through the website from a client system;

storing a reservation transaction within the server system, wherein the reservation transaction is representative of the created rental vehicle reservation;

electronically accepting additional data from the [[a]] user through the website for a potential rental of a rental vehicle based on the rental vehicle reservation;

communicating an electronic rental proposal for display to the user on a web page of the website, the electronic rental proposal being based on the rental vehicle reservation and the accepted additional data;

creating an electronic rental contract for a rental vehicle in response to an electronic acceptance by the user of the electronic rental proposal, the electronic rental contract permitting the user to avoid creating a rental contract at the rental counter when arriving at the car rental facility to pick up a rental vehicle in accordance with the electronic rental contract; and

storing a rental transaction within the server system, wherein the rental transaction is representative of the created electronic rental contract; and

wherein the electronically accepting, communicating, electronic rental contract creating and rental transaction storing steps are performed regardless of whether the user has a pre-existing master rental agreement with a rental car company that operates the car rental facility.

63. (previously presented) The method of claim 62 further comprising:
allocating a rental vehicle to the user at the car rental facility in accordance with the electronic rental contract without requiring the user to visit the rental counter.
64. (previously presented) The method of claim 62 further comprising:
after the reservation creating step, electronically receiving input from the user indicative of a request to convert the created reservation into an electronic rental contract; and
responsive to the received input, providing a web page of the website to a client system for display thereon that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user.
65. (previously presented) The method of claim 64 further comprising:
after the reservation creating step, providing a web page of the website to the client system for display thereon that is configured to provide the user with a user-selectable option to only create the reservation and a user-selectable option to convert the created reservation into an electronic rental contract; and
wherein the input receiving step comprises receiving a user selection of the option to convert the created reservation into an electronic rental contract, thereby advancing the user to the web page that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user.
66. (currently amended) The method of claim 64 further comprising:
after the reservation creating step, sending an email to the user, wherein the email comprises (1) a confirmation of the created reservation, and (2) a user-selectable link that is effective upon user selection to link the user to the first web page that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user; and
wherein the input receiving step comprises receiving a user selection of the link.
67. (previously presented) The method of claim 64 further comprising:
automatically pre-filling at least a portion of the additional data into a web page of the website from a rental history associated with the user.
68. (currently amended) The method of claim ~~67~~ 64 further comprising:

receiving a selection by the user of a button on the web page that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user; and

responsive to the button selection, ~~performing the~~ automatically pre-filling step at least a portion of the additional data into that web page from a rental history associated with the user.

69. (previously presented) The method of claim 64 further comprising:
automatically performing a suggestive sell for the potential rental through a web page of the website based on a rental history associated with the user.

70. (previously presented) The method of claim 69 wherein the suggestive sell is for an optional coverage item for the potential rental.

71. (previously presented) The method of claim 62 further comprising:
for a user who has a pre-existing master rental agreement with the rental car company, (1) providing a web page of the website to a client system for display thereon that is configured to solicit the data for creating the reservation from the user, and (2) automatically pre-filling at least a portion of the data for creating the reservation into that web page from the master rental agreement.

72. (previously presented) The method of claim 71 further comprising:
permitting the user to electronically modify the pre-filled data without modifying the master rental agreement.

73. (currently amended) The method of claim 72 further comprising:
receiving a modification of the pre-filled data from the user through the website; and
electronically notifying the user with a selectable option to keep the modification and a selectable option to revert to the pre-filled data;
receiving a selection of one of the two options from the user; and
using data for the reservation based on the received option selection.

74. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 wherein the additional data comprises driver's license information for the user, the method further comprising performing the following steps before the communicating step:

electronically performing a validation operation on the driver's license information such that the communicating step is not performed should the validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid; and

should the validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid, electronically requesting that the user re-submit new driver's license information.

75. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 wherein the additional data comprises credit card payment information for the user, the method further comprising performing the following steps before the communicating step:

electronically performing a validation operation on the credit card payment information such that the communicating step is not performed should the validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid; and

should the validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid, electronically requesting that the user re-submit new credit card payment information.

76. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 wherein the additional data comprises driver's license information for the user and credit card payment information for the user, the method further comprising performing the following steps before the communicating step:

electronically performing a first validation operation on the driver's license information such that the communicating step is not performed should the first validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid;

should the first validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid, electronically requesting that the user re-submit new driver's license information;

electronically performing a second validation operation on the credit card payment information such that the communicating step is not performed should the second validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid; and

should the second validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid, electronically requesting that the user re-submit new credit card payment information.

77. (previously presented) The method of claim 62 wherein the server system is operated by the rental car company.

78. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 wherein the additional data comprises a modification of ~~a data item from~~ the reservation data.

Claims 79-112: CANCELED

113. (currently amended) A system for creating and storing an electronic rental contract for a rental vehicle such that a user need not visit a rental counter to create a rental contract when arriving at a car rental facility to pick up the rental vehicle, the system comprising a server system configured to:

host a website, the website comprising a plurality of web pages for access over a network by any of a plurality of client systems;

create a rental vehicle reservation in response to data received through the website from a client system;

store a reservation transaction, wherein the reservation transaction is representative of the created rental vehicle reservation;

electronically accept additional data from the ~~the~~ [[a]] user through the website for a potential rental of a rental vehicle based on the rental vehicle reservation;

communicate an electronic rental proposal for display to the user on a web page of the website, the electronic rental proposal being based on the rental vehicle reservation and the accepted additional data;

create an electronic rental contract for a rental vehicle in response to an electronic acceptance by the user of the electronic rental proposal, the electronic rental contract permitting the user to avoid creating a rental contract at the rental counter when arriving at the car rental facility to pick up a rental vehicle in accordance with the electronic rental contract; and

store a rental transaction, wherein the rental transaction is representative of the created electronic rental contract; and

wherein the server system is further configured to perform the additional data acceptance, the electronic rental proposal communication, the electronic rental contract creation and the rental transaction storage regardless of whether the user has a pre-existing master rental agreement with a rental car company that operates the car rental facility.

114. (previously presented) The system of claim 113 wherein the server system is further configured to:

after the reservation creation, receive input from the user indicative of a request to convert the created reservation into an electronic rental contract; and

responsive to the received input, provide a web page of the website to a client system for display thereon that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user.

115. (previously presented) The system of claim 114 wherein the server system is further configured to:

after the reservation creation, provide a web page of the website to the client system for display thereon that is configured to provide the user with a user-selectable option to only create the reservation and a user-selectable option to convert the created reservation into an electronic rental contract; and

receive a user selection of the option to convert the created reservation into an electronic rental contract for thereby advancing the user to the web page that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user.

116. (currently amended) The system of claim 114 wherein the server system is further configured to:

after the reservation creation, send an email to the user, wherein the email comprises (1) a confirmation of the created reservation, and (2) a user-selectable link that is effective upon user selection to link the user to the first web page that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user; and

receive a user selection of the link.

117. (previously presented) The system of claim 114 wherein the server system is further configured to automatically pre-fill at least a portion of the additional data into a web page of the website from a rental history associated with the user.

118. (currently amended) The system of claim 114 wherein the server system is further configured to:

receive a selection by the user of a button on the web page that is configured to solicit the additional data from the user; and

responsive to the button selection, automatically perform the automatic pre-fill at least a portion of the additional data into that web page from a rental history associated with the user.

119. (previously presented) The system of claim 114 wherein the server system is further configured to:

automatically perform a suggestive sell for the potential rental through a web page of the website based on a rental history associated with the user.

120. (previously presented) The system of claim 119 wherein the suggestive sell is for an optional coverage item for the potential rental.

121. (previously presented) The system of claim 113 further comprising:

for a user who has a pre-existing master rental agreement with the rental car company, (1) provide a web page of the website to a client system for display thereon that is configured to solicit the data for creating the reservation from the user, and (2) automatically pre-fill at least a portion of the data for creating the reservation into that web page from the master rental agreement.

122. (previously presented) The system of claim 121 wherein the server system is further configured to permit the user to electronically modify the pre-filled data without modifying the master rental agreement.

123. (currently amended) The system of claim 122 wherein the server system is further configured to:

receive a modification of the pre-filled data from the user through the website; and
notify the user with a selectable option to keep the modification and a selectable option to revert to the pre-filled data;

receive a selection of one of the two options from the user; and
use data for the reservation based on the received option selection.

124. (currently amended) The system of claim 113 wherein the additional data comprises driver's license information for the user, and wherein the server system is further configured to perform the following actions before the electronic rental proposal communication:

perform a validation operation on the driver's license information such that the electronic rental proposal communication is not performed should the validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid; and

should the validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid, electronically request that the user re-submit new driver's license information.

125. (currently amended) The system of claim 113 wherein the additional data comprises credit card payment information for the user, and wherein the server system is further configured to perform the following actions before the electronic rental proposal communication:

perform a validation operation on the credit card payment information such that the electronic rental proposal communication is not performed should the validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid; and

should the validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid, electronically request that the user re-submit new credit card payment information.

126. (currently amended) The system of claim 113 wherein the additional data comprises driver's license information for the user and credit card payment information for the user, and wherein the server system is further configured to perform the following actions before the electronic rental proposal communication:

perform a first validation operation on the driver's license information such that the electronic rental proposal communication is not performed should the first validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid;

should the first validation operation indicate the driver's license information is invalid, electronically request that the user re-submit new driver's license information;

perform a second validation operation on the credit card payment information such that the electronic rental proposal communication is not performed should the second validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid; and

should the second validation operation indicate the credit card payment information is invalid, electronically request that the user re-submit new credit card payment information.

127. (currently amended) The system of claim 113 wherein the additional data comprises a modification of ~~a data item from the reservation~~ data.

Claims 128-135: CANCELED

136. CANCELED

137. (currently amended) The system of claim 113 ~~436~~ wherein the server system is further configured to perform the additional data acceptance, the electronic rental proposal communication, the electronic rental contract creation and the rental transaction storage for a user who does not have a pre-existing master rental agreement with the rental car company.

138. CANCELED

139. (currently amended) The method of claim 62 ~~438~~ wherein the electronically accepting, communicating, electronic rental contract creating and rental transaction storing steps are performed for a user who does not have a pre-existing master rental agreement with the rental car company.